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BUSINESS DEMOGRAPHY ISSUES AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON DYNAMICS OF ENTERPRISES' POPULATION IN POLAND

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Abstract. Business demography allows to measure the performance of enterprises in economy. The case of a country in transition such as Poland is a very interesting one. Despite joining the EU, there is still scarce and low quality data available. In fact, publications of the Central Statistical Office cover only firms registered in REGON (business register), which differs from the actual number of active enterprises. The number of active businesses represents about 60% of total registered firms. This study attempts to identify the most important qualitative and quantitative factors determining births and deaths of enterprises in the context of economic changes during the transition period. Due to limited access to additional surveys the analysis mainly focuses on the available data and covers descriptive analysis based on demographic indicators. Most spectacular results show that the dynamics of business population has been very low in recent years.

Key words: business demography, enterprise population dynamics, enterprise birth rate, enterprise death rate, enterprise survival

INTRODUCTION

Business demography is a research discipline that refers to data collection and the analysis of enterprise population dynamics. An enterprise can enter or leave a market as a result of different events. In many cases, the moment of an enterprise set up is strictly connected to its formal registration, whereas enterprise closure entails a deletion of its record from a business register [Schmiemann, 2006, p. 11]. The problem is that new registration is not always equal to a real start-up of a company. Similarly, the factual end of activity often takes place earlier than the deletion from the register. Data compiled from various countries appears to be additionally biased by differences in the range of observations. Some countries include self-employment in enterprise population

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statistics, while others omit such data. In some states reports concern enterprises, in others local units. In some countries foreign companies are included, in others not. A definition of enterprise birth was established at the EU level [European Commission, Regulation no. 2700/98]. According to this definition, a birth does not refer to a new enterprise that came to life due to a split-up of previously existing unit or a change in the character of activity. As in the case of deaths, takeovers and mergers are not taken into account.

Birth rates and death rates are calculated as a proportion of entries and exits of enterprises during the reference year to the mean number of active enterprises in the reference year (in percent). The difference between these two ratios gives the real dynamics in enterprises population in a given year [Business demography in Europe, Enterprise publications, EC 2002, p. 14].

Birth rates and death rates are calculated according to the following formulae:

$$\text{Birth Rate}_t = \frac{\text{Number of births}_t}{\text{Mean number of active enterprises}_t} 100\% \quad (1)$$

$$\text{Death Rate}_t = \frac{\text{Number of deaths}_t}{\text{Mean number of active enterprises}_t} 100\% \quad (2)$$

Recently the interest in business demography in Poland has increased significantly. First works strictly dedicated to the analysis of the enterprise population dynamics development have appeared. Dominiak and Markowicz's papers [Dominiak 2005, Markowicz 2008] present definitions of business demography as a research discipline as well as detailed definitions of demographic ratios. These works refer to SME sector to a great degree. Studies on bigger companies and corporations were published by Rogowski and Socha [Rogowski, Socha 2005].

Business demography analyses in Poland are not systemized. Markowicz attempts to enumerate some basic measures connected with the description of enterprise population. Author [Markowicz 2008] lists numerous distinct measures, which makes the analysis slightly unclear for the readers. Her understanding of the rate of enterprises emerging and exiting in comparison with the ratio of births and deaths is quite fuzzy.

Some basic measures and definitions coherent with Eurostat publications were introduced by Ptak-Chmielewska in papers published in 2009 and 2010 [Ptak-Chmielewska 2009, 2010].

However, one needs to account for some weaknesses of REGON register measures as they do not clearly specify the real activity moment. A record in a business register does not always mean the actual start of activity. In this paper the analyses are based on measures and definitions presented and published by Eurostat, which allows to make

comparisons between countries. In this paper a birth rate and death rate as measures of dynamics are differentiated following Eurostat.

Analyses of business demography are usually presented in the following subjects: number of births and birth rates; number of deaths and death rate; survival rates; influence on employment.

The classifications used in comparisons are: company size measured by the number of people employed; sector of enterprise activity; geographical situation (EU, new members and candidate countries).

According to such classifications and divisions, the results for Poland in the period 1997–2009 are presented in this paper. Data for 2010 are not available yet.

In this study the analyses of enterprise birth and death processes are based on data concerning private sector only. Data for public sector was excluded. Comparative analyses involving the EU countries are limited to business sector and cover PKD sectors (Polish Classification of Activities) such as C–K without J – financial services and sections M-O.

Indicators in sector analysis concern classification encompassing four groups of activities (according to Eurostat):

- Industry (Sections C–E),
- Construction (Sections F),
- Services (Sections G–K),
- Other services (Sections' M–O).

Analyses with regard to the size of enterprise measured by the number of employees are not presented due to data limitations.

PROCESS OF ENTERPRISES' BIRTHS IN YEARS 1997–2009

For the presentation of changes in the process of enterprise births in Poland the birth rate was used. The birth rate is calculated as the proportion of newly registered firms in the reference year to the mean number of active enterprises in the reference year in percent (see formula 1). The number of active enterprises was taken from estimations made by Chmiel [Chmiel 1997, 1999, 2004]. The estimations covered the period 1993–2002. For the years 2003–2009 the number of active enterprises was assumed to be at the level of ca. 54% of all registered enterprises. 54% is the mean value of the proportion of active to registered enterprises from the years 2000–2002 (last available years from Chmiel's estimations). Real values of calculated rates should be also verified as not all newly register firms start their activity immediately after registration. Such corrections require additional research (unavailable at this moment). Assuming that the proportion of really active start-ups is stable, some conclusions about the tempo and direction of changes can be drawn based on the ratio presented in Figure 1 (data from CSO, 2010).

In the years 1997–2009 the birth rate dropped from over 25% to the level of 15%. In 2002–2005 the rate level was stable and remained slightly above 15%. In the reference year in that period out of 100 active enterprises 15 new firms were born.

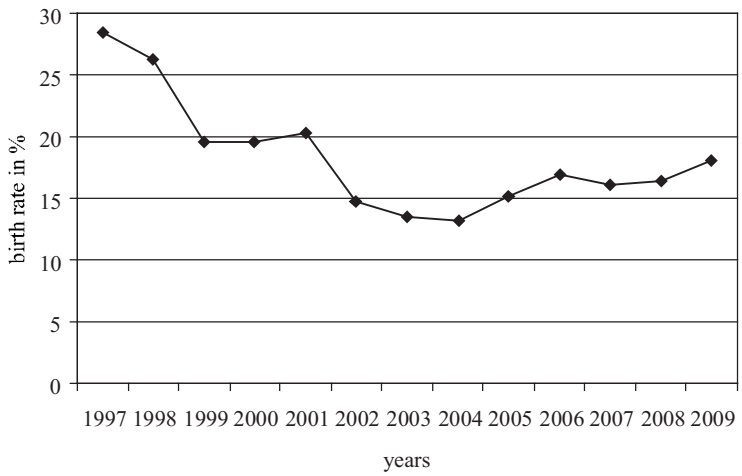

Fig. 1. Enterprise birth rates in Poland, 1997–2009
Rys. 1. Współczynnik „urodzeń" przedsiębiorstw w Polsce, 1997–2009
Source: Own calculations based on CSO data.
Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie danych GUS.

SECTOR OF ACTIVITY

The analysis with regard to the sector of activity covers four sectors: Industry (sections C–E), Construction (section F), Services (sections G–K) and Other services (sections M–O).

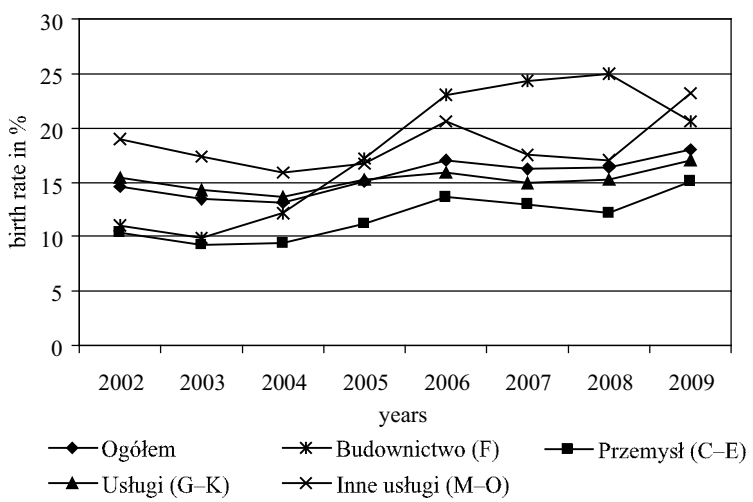

Fig. 2. Enterprise birth rates in Poland – Sector of activity
Rys. 2. Współczynniki „urodzeń" przedsiębiorstw w Polsce wg sektora działalności
Source: Own calculations based on CSO data.
Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie o danych GUS.

The greatest increase in birth rates was observed in the construction sector. Birth rate for this sector increased from 10% in 2002–2004 to 25% in 2008. The birth rate for "Other services" remained few pp higher than in the industry and services sectors (see Figure 2).

PROCESS OF ENTERPRISES' DEATHS IN YEARS 1997–2009

The analysis of business death process is much more difficult as it is impossible to make adjustments to the definition provided by Eurostat. According to Eurostat's definition, a death means exiting the market with no return within the period of 2 years. In the case of Poland it is difficult to access data at the individual level using REGON register. Further research and calculations are required to reconstruct individual unit history.

A death rate would mean the proportion of the number of enterprises deleted from the register during the reference year to the mean number of active enterprises during the reference year presented in percent (see formula 2).

Data presented in Figure 3 concerns quantities without correction due to no return within 2 years. Assuming that the proportion of returning enterprises is stable, we can conclude on some basic changes in the dynamics of death process.

At present, the death rate amounts to ca. 12%. During the period 1997–2009 the death rate dropped from 18% to 12%. Yet, the trend was not the same during the analyzed period. A downturn trend was noticed in the years 1997–2002, whereas in the years 2002––2009 an upturn trend was observed. The lowest level of the death rate amounting to ca. 7–10% was observed in the period 1999–2004.

The comparison between the birth rate and death rate shows the actual increase in the population of enterprises in Poland.

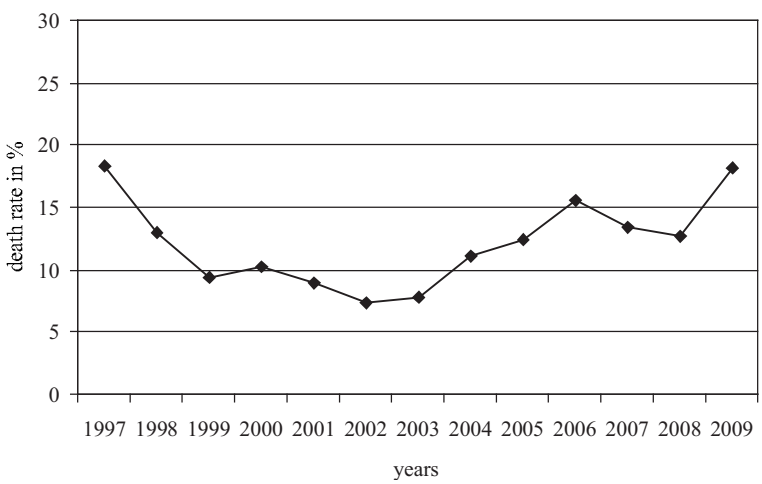

Fig. 3. Enterprise death rates in Poland, 1997–2009
Rys. 3. Współczynniki "zgonów" przedsiębiorstw w Polsce, 1997–2009
Source: Own calculations based on CSO data.
Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie danych GUS.

SECTOR OF ACTIVITY

The fluctuations in the death rate are very similar for different sectors. The highest death rate was observed in the construction sector. For this area the highest birth rate was also noticed. In the years 2002–2003 the differences between sectors were considerably smaller than in the years 2004–2006. In 2007 decreasing differences between sectors were identified again (see Figure 4).

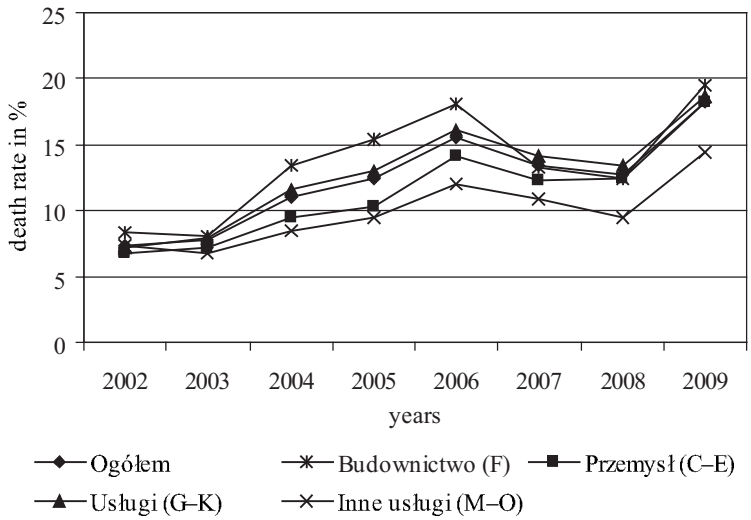

Figure 4. Enterprise death rates in Poland – Sector of activity
Rys. 4. Współczynnik „zgonów" przedsiębiorstw w Polsce wg sektora działalności
Source: Own calculations based on CSO data.
Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie danych GUS.

ENTERPRISES' SURVIVAL IN POLAND

The difference between birth rates and death rates produces the actual picture of the enterprise population dynamics. The one recorded in the years 1997–2009 for the population of enterprises can be described as positive. In the period 1997–2001 the difference was at the level of 10–12%, in the period 2002–2003 accounted for 6–7%, and in the years 2003–2007 dropped to ca. 2%. After a slight increase in 2008 the difference between the birth rate and death rate dropped to 0, which means almost null dynamics of enterprise population.

Sector of activity

From the perspective of sector division the differences between sectors are significant. In the case of construction sector, for which the birth rates and death rates were the highest, the changes in difference between these rates are the biggest. The dynamics of growth is the highest but only for the period 2004–2008. In 2004 the death rate is higher than

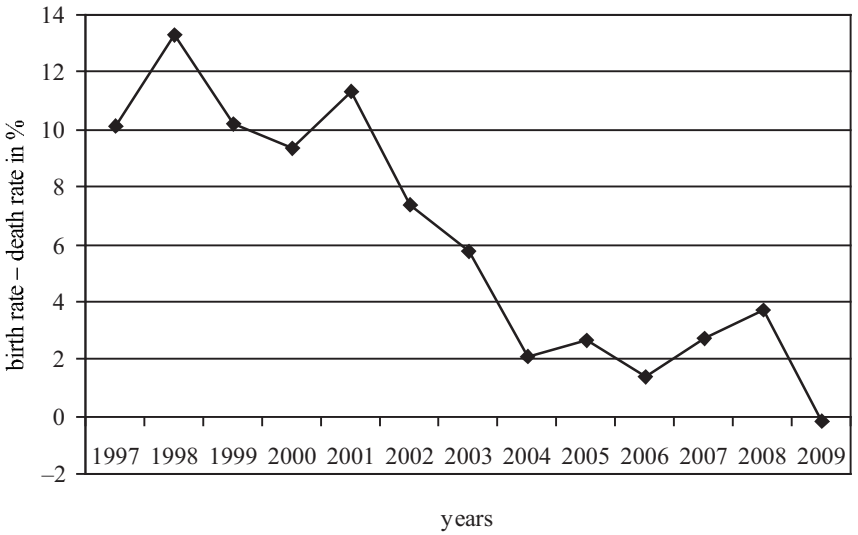

Fig. 5. Difference between the birth rate and death rate of enterprises in Poland, 1997–2009
Rys. 5. Różnica pomiędzy współczynnikiem „urodzeń" i „zgonów" w Polsce, 1997–2009
Source: Own calculations based on CSO data.
Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie danych GUS.

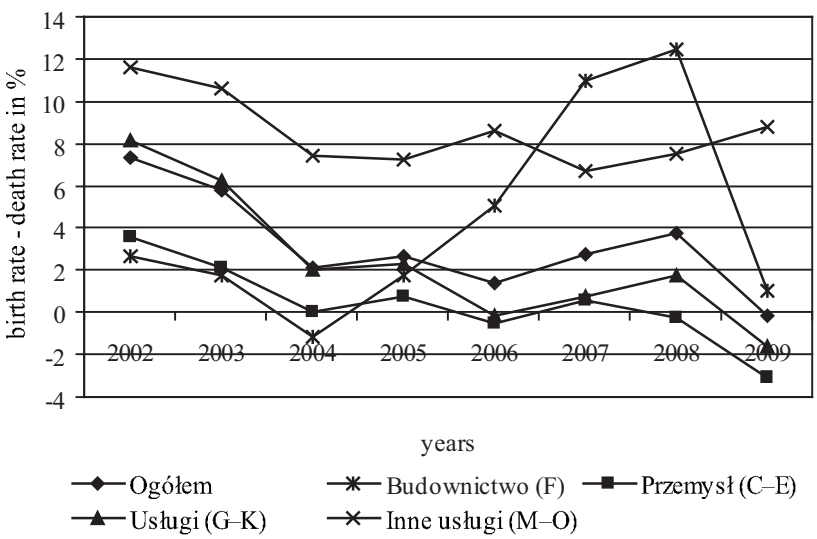

Fig. 6. Difference between birth rates and death rates of enterprises in Poland – sector of activity
Rys. 6. Różnica pomiędzy współczynnikiem "urodzeń" i "zgonów" w Polsce według sektora działalności
Source: Own calculations based on CSO data.
Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie danych GUS.

birth rate for this sector. Since 2004 the difference between the birth rate and death rate for the construction sector has been growing up to 12% in 2008. In 2009 this difference drops dramatically to 1%. The highest difference and therefore the highest dynamics of growth is observed for the sector "Other services" (ca. 2–4 pp higher than for industry and services). For the industry and services the difference between the birth rate and death rate becomes negative for 2009. If this tendency prevails the dynamics for these sectors remains negative and the number of active enterprises decreases. This tendency is very inconvenient for the economic growth in these sectors.

Some very interesting data on small enterprises in Poland was collected by CSO in the panel survey conducted since 2001[1]. This survey is based on a sample of small enterprises. Basic results of this survey are summarized below (information published by CSO annually after each panel is completed):

In 2005 in REGON 211.11 thousand small enterprises (employing fewer than 50 people) were registered (including 208.9 thousand enterprises employing fewer than 10 people). The dominant group consisted of enterprises of private individuals (94.4% of the whole sample). Only one out of four employers declared that they were going to employ new workers.

The most popular form of activity was trade (36.65), real estate and services (18%), construction (11.3%) and industry (9.7%). The most rare activity was business education (1.9%). Majority of new enterprises were completely new units on the market (94.1%). The starting activity was financed with own funds (83.9%), with family and friends funds (6.2%) and bank loans (4.0%).

New companies were statistically more often established by men than women (56.8% and 43.2%). The frequency of new companies set up by men was higher than the mean frequency in construction (87.65), transportation (76.3%), industry (74.4%), real estate and corporate services (61.3%). Women more frequently established new companies in other services (75.6%), education (63.4%), healthcare (62.4%), trade (52,5%) and financial services (52.3%).

[1] Survey is conducted by CSO (Central Statistical Office) since 2002. Each panel covers enterprises newly born in the previous year and observed (re-interviewed annually) during 5 years of their activity. In 2007 the 5th panel was completed for the sample of new enterprises born in 2001. Results of each panel are published annually. The newest publications cover data on completed and non-completed panels. All interviews are conducted in autumn of each 5 year period. In the first panel newly registered enterprises are interviewed. Starting from the second year only still active enterprises are interviewed. No additional observations enter the sample, which contributes to a diminishing amount of enterprises interviewed each year. The survey covers small enterprises (fewer than 50 employees). Survey selection was based on a representative sample covering 3 thousand units (1.4% of population) born in 2001. The survey was based on proportional sampling without replacement, constant fraction with stratum. Results are presented in basic classifications: legal form, size and type of activity. The questionnaire in subsequent years covered information on: activity, legal form, size, development conditions. In the first year there was extra information on the way of entering the market and selected owner's characteristics such as sex, age, education, type of previous employment. Evaluation of enterprise condition used information on the number of workers, range of activity, financial results, investment and barriers.
The completion index was 80–90%. Missing values were imputed by hot-deck method. Weights were used to assure the adequate stratum assumptions.

Majority of people starting new businesses are under 39 years old (66.2%), including 37.2% under the age of 37. The youngest businessmen most frequently started businesses in education (55.5%), transportation (42.9%) and other services (42.1%), and businessmen at the age of 30–39 most frequently opened businesses in healthcare and industry (38,7%, 36,4%). The oldest people – 60 years old and more – accounted for only 3,3% of the population of businessmen opening new firms.

New businessmen in majority completed secondary education (41.9%) and higher education (35%). People with secondary education dominated among such activities as hotels and restaurants (70.2%) and trade (53.6%), while people with higher education dominated in such activities as healthcare (86.9%), education (80.7%), financial services (63.1%) and real estate and corporate services (56.1%).

Before starting a new business 38.1% of people worked as white-collar workers. For 35.7% people own company was the first place of work or they were unemployed before.

According to this panel survey, 2/3 of enterprises born in 2005 survived till the end of 2006 [GUS, 2007, p. 18]. The frequency was higher for legal companies (78.2%) than for private individuals (67%). Higher frequency of survivals was observed for enterprises employing workers (72.1%) than for self-employed (66.45). The highest survival rate was recorded in education and healthcare (81% in both cases). The lowest survival rate was noted for hotels and restaurants (61.7%). As a consequence of differences in survival rates the structure of enterprises at the end of 2006 changed in comparison to 2005. Changes in the type of activities also influenced the structure of enterprises.

The majority of new enterprises (56.6%), declared that following their start they were working only on the local market, whereas only 6.75% entered international markets. Most of newly born enterprises finished their first year of activity with positive financial results. In fact, only one out of five companies recorded losses. In addition, one third of owners decided to start investments. In order to finance investments private funds were used in 69.5% cases and bank loans in 22.4%. Every other owner did not report any problems with production or product sales. Demand barriers and difficulties were reported by one out of three businessmen and only one out of twenty reported supply barriers. Businessmen reporting both types of barriers were in the most difficult situation [see also Balcerowicz 2004].

More interesting data was collected in the fifth panel of survey covering enterprises born in 2001 that survived to the year 2006. Only smallest firms were selected (fewer than 10 workers) for the analyses from the following sectors: industry, construction, trade, hotels and restaurants, transportation and real estate and corporate services. Among 209.4 thousand newly born enterprises registered in 2001 in REGON, in 2006 almost 59 thousand were still active (28.1% of population). This frequency was much higher for legal companies than for private individuals. Higher frequency was also observed for companies employing staff (every other enterprise was active). The highest frequencies were recorded in industry (34%), transportation (30.6%) and real estate and corporate services (30.5%). The lowest survival rate was typical for hotels and restaurants (16.6%). Units active after 5 years are mostly businesses of private individuals (92.7% compared to 95.8% at the beginning). Units without any hired workers after 5 years amounted to 53.8% in comparison to 74.1% at the start. In the 5th year of activity the most frequent

were trade firms. The most stable were units that declared at the beginning such activities as hotels and restaurants as well as trade (99.4% and 90.5% accordingly did not change their type of activity). The most unstable were units declaring transportation and real estate and corporate services as their types of activities (19.7% and 16.3% units accordingly were active in different areas than declared at the start).

CONCLUSIONS

Business demography seems to be a dynamically growing research area. The research focuses on enterprise population dynamics measurement and empirical results. The analysis presented in this paper covers the period from 1997 to 2009. Data availability for earlier years is very limited. The range of various comparisons was restricted to the sector of activity and geographical situation (European Union). The study was based on the estimation of basic demographic indicators such as birth rates and death rates. Main conclusions are the following:

Birth rate for enterprises in the analysed period dropped to ca. 14%, however in last two years we observe a slight increase in this rate.

Death rate for all enterprises in the analysed period increased to the level of ca. 12%. During the period from 1997 to 2009 the death rate decreased and then stabilized at the level of ca. 7–10% The increasing tendency has been observed since 2002 till now.

Decreasing level of birth rate and increasing level of death rate result in slow dynamics of enterprise population in Poland.

Dynamics of enterprise population development measured by the difference between the birth rate and death rate has decreased in recent years reaching 2% (from ca 10% in the beginning of analysed period).

The analyses presented in this paper cover only empirical data studies and do not refer to theoretical background corresponding to the behaviour of enterprises. A research hypothesis is likely to be formulated after the review of theories. Demographic theories were many times verified with the use of analytical tools. With treating the population of enterprises as similar to human population it is possible to verify theories on the behaviour of enterprises using demographic analysis tools. Next steps in business demography research would be the verification of basic enterprise theories with the use of demographic analysis tools.

ANNEX

Data collection for business demography is specified in the Council regulations (EC, EURATOM) no 58/97 dated 20 December 1996 in the range of structural statistics of a business. Basic characteristics such as the number of births and number of deaths of enterprises were defined in Commission Regulation (EC) no 2700/98 dated 17 December 1998 as an annex covering definitions as legal basis for business demography statistics. Data collection is voluntary. Basic source of data in this action is statistical business register. Such registers are built on the basis of few different sources depending on the country.

In the Business Demography Project, NACE Code was used to define the range of basic indicators in calculations. Business economy covers sections C–K and M–O. Data on agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing, public administration, households with employees, exterritorial organizations, and management activities of holding companies is not collected. Aggregations were done on business economy to: industry (sections C-E) construction (section F) and services (section G–K) and other services (M–O) [Hult M. 2003, p. 7].

Birth (European Commission, Regulation no 2700/98) (all definitions follow EC publications, Eurostat-OECD, 2007) – the creation of a combination of production factors with the restriction that no other enterprises are involved in the event. Births do not include entries into the population due to mergers, break-ups, split-off or restructuring of a set of enterprises. Births do not include entries into a sub-population resulting only from a change of activity. If a dormant unit is reactivated within two years, this event is not considered a birth.

Birth rate – number of enterprise births in the reference period *t* divided by the number of enterprises active in *t*.

Death (European Commission, Regulation no 2700/98) – the dissolution of a combination of production factors with the restriction that no other enterprises are involved in the event. Deaths do not include exits from the population due to mergers, take-overs, break-ups or restructuring of a set of enterprises. Deaths do not include exits from a sub-population resulting only from a change of activity. An enterprise is included in the amount of deaths only if it is not reactivated within two years.

Death rate – number of enterprise deaths in the reference period *t* divided by the number of enterprises active in *t*.

Active enterprise – enterprise that had a turnover or employment in any time during the reference period even in limited time. If no information is available to define the active enterprise, the local country-specific methods are used. Number of active enterprises during reference period is defined as „population of active enterprises".

Survival – is defined as the continuity of an enterprise over time. Thus an enterprise has survived from year t to year t + x if it is still active in year t + x, even if it had a change of ownership.

Survival rate – the number of enterprises in the reference period (*t*) newly born in *t–x* having survived to year *t* divided by the number of enterprise births in *t–x*. In the case of a 2-year survival rate x = 2, in the case of a 5-year survival rate x = 5.

Statistical unit – enterprise – is defined in Council Regulation (EEC no 696/93 of 15 March 1993) – as the smallest combination of legal units that is an organizational unit producing goods or services, which benefits from a certain degree of autonomy in decision-making, especially for the allocation of its current resources.

NACE – hierarchical classification of economic activities (Hult, 2003, and Business demography in Europe. Results for 10 member states and Norway. Data 1997–2001, (EC, p. 134), including four levels of economic activities classification:

Level 1 (Section) alphabetical code.

Mid Level (Subsection) two-character alphabetical code.

Level 2 (Division) two-digit numerical code.

Level 3 (Group) three-digit numerical code.

Level 4 (Class) four-digit numerical code.

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DEMOGRAFIA PRZEDSIĘBIORSTW – IDEA I BADANIA EMPIRYCZNE NA DYNAMICE POPULACJI PRZEDSIĘBIORSTW W POLSCE

Streszczenie. Demografia przedsiębiorstw pozwala na pomiar zachowania przedsiębiorstw w gospodarce. Przypadek kraju w okresie transformacji, jakim jest Polska, to bardzo ciekawy przypadek. Brak danych i ich niska jakość są w dalszym ciągu problemem, pomimo wejścia do Unii Europejskiej już w 2004 roku. Dane dostępne w publikacjach GUS zawierają tylko informacje o przedsiębiorstwach zarejestrowanych w rejestrze REGON, które różnią się znacznie od danych o przedsiębiorstwach faktycznie aktywnych na rynku. Liczba aktywnych przedsiębiorstw stanowi ok. 60% wszystkich zarejestrowanych. W badaniach poszukuje się czynników jakościowych i ilościowych determinujących „urodzenia" i „zgony" przedsiębiorstw w kontekście przemian ekonomicznych w okresie transformacji ustrojowej. Ze względu na brak lub ograniczoną liczbę dodatkowych badań analizy koncentrują się głównie na dostępnych danych i ograniczają do analizy opisowej opartej na współczynnikach demograficznych. Najważniejsze wyniki analiz wskazują na bardzo niską dynamikę populacji przedsiębiorstw w ostatnich latach.

Słowa kluczowe: demografia przedsiębiorstw, dynamika populacji przedsiębiorstw, współczynnik „urodzeń" przedsiębiorstw, współczynnik „zgonów" przedsiębiorstw, wskaźnik „przeżycia" przedsiębiorstw

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